

men, and at club meetings. Not only did the standard speechmakers make their rounds, but local Wilmington leaders also pressed the issue. For example, J. Allan Taylor of the Secret Nine read a prepared statement to the Chamber of Commerce in October that was later republished in the newspapers.²² Another speaker and Democratic Party leader, attorney George Rountree, met with a White Government Union and planned to “inflame the white men’s sentiment.” Rountree discovered that his prepared speech was unnecessary because the men were “already willing to kill all of the office holders and all the negroes.”²³ As evidenced by Rountree’s experience, the speeches and the print campaign material evolved into a valuable, effective, tool to enflame the city’s residents.

Alfred Moore Waddell

While not the most prolific of the speakers for Simmons’ early campaign, Wilmington resident Alfred Moore Waddell proved the most cataclysmic of performers. Waddell, an aging member of Wilmington’s upper class, had served in the United States Congress from 1870 to 1878, and, by the end of the 1898 campaign, had worked himself into a position of prominence as a representative of the oppressed whites in New Hanover for the rest of the state and a symbol of redemption for the county’s enflamed white voters.²⁴

Waddell emerged as the fieriest of white supremacy’s speechmakers after an oration he gave on October 24 at Thalian

Waddell was sought after to provide moving speeches in political campaigns and civic ceremonies. Waddell prided himself on his family lineage and, as a result, penned several works on his family’s history and the Cape Fear region. Waddell’s third wife, Gabrielle, noted in her journal that he gave a “great” speech at the Opera House in Wilmington on October 24, 1898. A relative wrote that there was “such demand for him all over the state since (what they call) his wonderful speech.” Historians have speculated on Waddell’s motivation to thrust himself into the spotlight. Leon Prather claimed that, although Waddell’s exterior indicated a calm tempered man, his “speeches contained some of the most violent tirades ever uttered from the rostrum.” Further, Waddell was apparently experiencing difficult financial burdens by 1898 since other Wilmington residents such as Benjamin Keith knew that Waddell was unemployed. Chief of Police Melton thought that Waddell’s motivation was more to “get a position and office” since “he had been out of public life for a long time, and that was his opportunity to put himself before the people and pose as a patriot, thereby getting to the feed trough.” To back up this claim, Melton later testified that Waddell was “hired to attend elections and see that men voted correctly.” Waddell’s wife provided additional support for the household by teaching music daily. According to Jerome McDuffie, who interviewed Wilmington residents, Waddell’s law practice was in decline, and he “had been seeking an office” in order to “lighten the burden of his wife.” *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v., “Waddell, Alfred Moore;” *Diary of Gabrielle de Rosset Waddell*, October 24, 1898, de Rosset Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill; Letter to R.A. Meares, October 29, 1898, de Rosset Papers, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill; Daniels, *Editor in Politics*, 301; McDuffie, “Politics in Wilmington,” 579, 644; Prather, *We Have Taken a City*, 87-8; Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 109; Benjamin Keith to Marion Butler, November 17, 1898; Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill; Leon Prather, “We Have Taken A City: A Centennial Essay,” in *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot and Its Legacy*, ed. David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 25-26; *Contested Election Case*, 378-9, 381.

²² The prepared statement is perhaps the correspondence of William Chadbourn. Hayden, *WLI*, 68.

²³ George Rountree, “Memorandum.”

²⁴ Waddell (1834-1912) was born in Hillsborough to parents who descended from Cape Fear leading families. Well educated, Waddell graduated from the University of North Carolina and practiced law before the Civil War. Waddell attained the rank of Lt. Col. in the 41st North Carolina Regiment but resigned his position due to ill health. A political conservative, Waddell was elected to Congress in 1870 and served three additional terms. As an orator,